

# Chronicle

A publication for friends and neighbors of the West Service Planning Area



Chronicle  
Winter 2003

Winter 2003

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## WALK YOUR WAY TO BETTER HEALTH

Photo caption:  
Left to Right -  
Russ Guiney, LA County  
Dept. of Parks & Rec.; Su-  
pervisor Yvonne Brathwaite  
Burke; Esther Feldman,  
President, Community Con-  
servancy International; Dr.  
Robert Ross, The California  
Endowment



November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2003 marked the opening of **The Walk for Health Trail**, a three-mile trail providing an easily accessible and high quality walking experience in Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area (KHSRA) in the Baldwin Hills. The trail encourages park visitors to improve their health by walking and developing a healthy lifestyle. Colorful signs mark the trail highlighting such health concerns as proper breathing, hydration, proper eating habits, calorie control and heart rate. These signs not only tout human health and exercise information but also include facts about the Baldwin Hills' natural environment, plants and animals.

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## In Special Recognition of Deanna J. Ssutu

Mrs. Deanna J. Ssutu, long-time Public Health Nurse Supervisor for the West Service Planning Area (SPA 5), will conclude her illustrious 30 years of experience with Los Angeles County Public Health Services in March 2004. Mrs. Ssutu contributed considerably to ensuring disease management, health education and resource coordination to individuals and families in her area. While proactively participating in community events such as the annual flu outreach campaign and serving as liaison to groups like the Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District school nurses, Mrs. Ssutu worked to develop partnerships with the community to ensure the optimal health and well-being of area residents.

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## Tuberculosis Control Through Community Partnership

TB, or tuberculosis, is a disease caused by bacteria called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* that usually attacks the lungs. TB is spread through the air from one person to another when someone with TB of the lungs or throat coughs or sneezes and people nearby breathe in the bacteria and become infected.

The good news is that people with TB disease can be treated and cured if they seek medical help. Even better, people who have the latent form of TB infection but are not yet sick can take medicine so that they will never develop TB disease. With this in mind, Mary Singaus, West Service Planning Area (SPA 5) Public Health Nurse, provides TB education, screening, and appropriate referrals to local agencies, like Daybreak and the Salvation Army Monica Shelter (Samoshel).

Founded in 1986, Daybreak Day Center and Shelter is the only program in West Los Angeles specifically designed for homeless women who have long-term, debilitating mental illnesses. Daybreak assists women facing the double crisis of mental illness and homelessness with the support and services they need to stabilize their lives. Mrs. Singaus provides a well-received class, group discussion, screening and referrals for about 1 ½ hours, every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of the month at the Daybreak Day Center. For more information on Daybreak, please call 310.450.0650.

Opened in 1994, Samoshel provides emergency lodging and transitional housing for 110 homeless people, many of whom are referred by social service agencies in the city. Samoshel programs include on-site case management, alcohol/substance abuse classes, and job placement assistance. Every second Tuesday of each month, Mrs. Singaus shows a video on TB and provides Samoshel clients and staff with TB screening and appropriate referrals. For more information on Samoshel, please call 310.581.9825.

West SPA 5 is happy to promote the services of Daybreak and Samoshel and pleased to partner in collectively addressing TB control and prevention.

For a list of "Winter Shelters for the Homeless" in your area, please visit the link below and/or call the following number:

[www.lahsa.org/contracts/wintershelter/wslocations.htm](http://www.lahsa.org/contracts/wintershelter/wslocations.htm)

Winter Shelter Hotline Telephone: 1-800-548-6047

TDD: 1-800-660-4026, for the deaf and hearing disabled.

*Contributing Author: Jeremiah R. Garza, MA, MPH, CHES, Health Educator, Service Planning Area 5*

*Reference: [http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/faqs/qa\\_introduction.htm#Intro1](http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/faqs/qa_introduction.htm#Intro1)*

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## September Fest: Families, Communities, and Schools!

On Saturday, September 20, 2003 the SPA 5 Council in collaboration with Venice High School and the Los Angeles Unified School District-D held *September Fest: Families, Communities and Schools!*

Over 500 individuals attended *September Fest*. *September Fest* was a day of artistic performances, music, art, raffles, children's activities, and access to over 65 agencies that provide various resources and information to the families who attended.

*September Fest* was the creation of summer dialogues that SPA 5 began with a small group of parents in the Venice area. Parents shared their own experiences as parents, their concerns about education and the education of their children. From these dialogues emerged an interest in creating a venue where families could become more aware of what resources are available to support the efforts of parents, schools and communities.

*September Fest* is a true example of community collaboration. Parents helped guide the development of *September Fest*, various agencies and school administrators willfully stepped forward to contribute to the success of the event and Venice High School students came out at 7 am on a Saturday morning to provide additional support throughout the day. Many lessons were learned that day and we look forward to next year's *September Fest*.

For more information on next year's *September Fest* please contact the SPA 5 main office at (310) 391-1578

*Submitted by: Maria Elena Marquez, Coordinator, SPA 5 Council*

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT REACHES THOUSANDS OF HIGH-RISK WOMEN WITH MULTICULTURAL CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT CERVICAL CANCER

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services' Office of Women's Health, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the Women's Foundation of California hosted the Cervical Cancer Prevention and Education Initiative Community Breakfast from 8:00am – 10:00am on January 15, 2004 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in downtown Los Angeles. The event recognized Cervical Cancer Awareness Month (January) and highlighted results of the county's ongoing multicultural campaign to decrease the alarming rates of cervical cancer among high-risk women. Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis spoke to the over 400 community leaders and health professionals who attended.

According to USC's Los Angeles County Cancer Surveillance Program's 2001 Report, on average 561 women will be diagnosed with cervical cancer this year and 153 women will die from this disease. Cervical cancer disproportionately affects women of color. Latinas in Los Angeles County are especially affected by this preventable disease, with cervical cancer incidence rates over two times higher than the national average.

The Office of Women's Health has successfully reached thousands of high-risk women in Los Angeles County through an innovative multicultural educational campaign about the importance of Pap tests and how early detection and treatment can save lives. Between January 2002 and December 2003, nearly 13,000 appointments for free Pap tests were made. To reach targeted populations, a multi-lingual hotline (800-793-8090) was established and staffed with operators to assist callers in Spanish, English, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese and Armenian.

Latinas represented over 60% of the appointments followed by 27% Asian women and 6% African American women. More than 28% of the hotline appointments were for women at high risk for cervical cancer because they had not been screened in three years (the maximum recommended time between Pap tests) or had never been screened. "The response to this campaign clearly shows that using targeted, culturally appropriate messages was successful in reaching a significant number of underserved, at-risk women," said Ellen Eidem, M.S., Acting Director of the Office of Women's Health.

During the campaign, the Office of Women's Health participated in 110 health fairs, visited 78 sites with the Women's Health Mobile Van Outreach Program that screened 1,383 women, and collaborated with over 300 community partners to educate women about cervical cancer and provide free Pap tests to low-income women. More than 96% of the women reached in 2003 were women of color.

The Office of Women's Health was created by The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in 1998 to improve women's health status, focus on women's health policy and improve the access to care in the county safety-net system with emphasis on preventive health services for women. For additional information visit the Office of Women's Health web site at [www.paptestla.org](http://www.paptestla.org).

*By Jessica St. John  
Special Projects Manager  
Los Angeles County Office of Women's Health*

### INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE

"Live your life each day as you would climb a mountain. An occasional glance toward the summit keeps the goal in mind, but many beautiful scenes are to be observed from each new vantage point. Climb slowly, steadily, enjoying each passing moment; and the view from the summit will serve as a fitting climax for the journey.

*By Harold V. Melchert  
Source: The Power of Inspiration, Great Quotations Publishing Co., Glendale Heights, IL*

## WALK YOUR WAY TO BETTER HEALTH

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The opening of **The Walk for Health Trail** was marked by activities such as free health screenings, education and information and was largely the outcome of strong collaboration between L.A. County Public Health Service Planning Area (SPA 6) and A Su Salud (TO YOUR HEALTH), a community outreach program for Southern California coordinated by L.A. County Department of Health Services, Health Promotion & Binational/Border Health Division and Quilez & Associates, Inc.. In partnership with the Community Conservancy International's (CCI) Parks for Health Initiative, funded by The California Endowment, SPA 6 and A Su Salud helped coordinate and provide the community a series of free health screenings that included height and weight, vision, vital signs, diabetes and cholesterol tests, free immunizations for children and adults, and much more. In so doing, SPA 6 and A Su Salud helped to address the alarming rise in heart disease, obesity, diabetes and asthma in African-American and Latino communities. In fact, one of the biggest problems facing African-American and Latino communities in Los Angeles is the growing amount of obesity.

Results of the 2002 Los Angeles County Health Survey indicate that those who are obese are much more likely to report poor health and activity limitations and have been diagnosed with chronic diseases as well as depression. These facts are worrisome considering that over half (55%) of the county's adult population is either overweight or obese. The percentage of adults who are obese, based on self-reported height and weight, increased from 14.3% in 1997, to 19.3% in 2002 (Figure 1). Moreover, the obesity rate in 2002 was highest among African-Americans (31%), followed by Latinos (24%), Whites (16%), and Asians (6%) (Figure 1). L.A. County youth are also growing increasingly overweight and number among the least fit in the state. The percentage of overweight California youth was highest among boys and among Latino children overall, and highest by area among children attending schools in the south-central region of L.A. County.

Given this disconcerting backdrop, CCI, in partnership with SPA 6, worked closely with a multidisciplinary health committee, consisting of leaders from the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation and Health Services Departments, to develop strategies for reducing health disparities within the surrounding Baldwin Hills communities through park-based prevention and intervention opportunities. Without a doubt, reducing the number of people who are overweight and obese and the associated co-morbidities is a complex public health problem, and one that requires broad societal response to support healthy lifestyle behaviors. However, the opening of **The Walk for Health Trail**, an event largely spearheaded by SPA 6 and A Su Salud, is a healthy step in the right direction. So, what are you waiting for? Enjoy one of the most healthful activities you can do, take a brisk walk at KHSRA and enjoy the spectacular views and hundreds of plants and animals in the Baldwin Hills area.

*Contributing Authors: Jeremiah R. Garza, MA, MPH, CHES, Health Educator, Service Planning Area 5*

*Olga Galvan, MPH, CHES, Director of Binational/Border Health Program*

*Esther Feldman, President, Community Conservancy International*

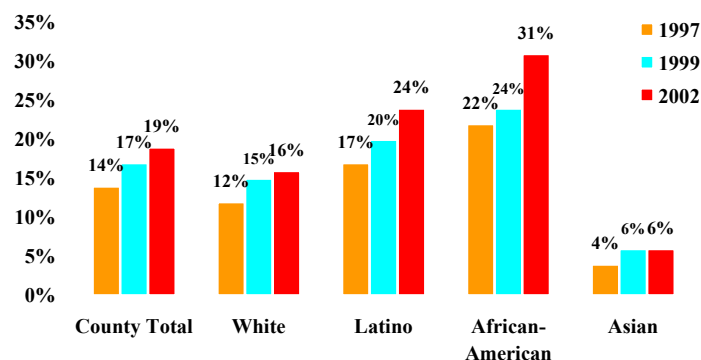
*Reference: July 2003 L.A. Health, Obesity on the Rise, Los Angeles Dept. of Health Services, Public Health*

### In Special Recognition of Deanna J. Ssutu

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Mrs. Ssutu will continue to contribute to improvements in the quality of life for all residents through active involvement in the annual flu campaign and other community activities. Mrs. Ssutu's dedication and exemplary career will continue to serve as the standard of excellence for public health nursing and will be greatly missed in the West Service Planning Area.

Figure 1. Prevalence of Obesity Among Adults by Race/ Ethnicity, 1997-2002



2002-2003 Los Angeles County Health Survey, Dept. of Health Services, Public Health

**Thank you Deanna for your dedication to the public's health!**  
**We wish you the best in your future endeavors!**



## A. Belinda Towns, M.D., M.P.H.

Dr. A. Belinda Towns has accepted the post of acting Medical Director for Community Health Services. Community Health Services includes the 8 Area Health Offices, 13 Public Health Clinics, Public Health Nursing Administration, Public Health Investigations, Quality Assurance Program, and community preventive dental services. Dr. Towns will continue her leadership role as Area Health Officer for SPA 5 through her Area Medical Director (for internal management) and her Area Nurse Manager (for community relations and communication). As such, Dr. Towns will continue to work hard to ensure that the needs of SPA 5 will not be neglected.

Dr. Towns has been with the department since 2001 and has proven her leadership talent in many ways. For instance, prior to coming to L.A. County Department of Health Services, Public Health, she was the Regional Director for HOPE Worldwide's "HOPE for Kids Program," a 6 county immunization and community outreach program. She also created and directed the Urban Health Initiative, a project, jointly supported by the California Endowment and World Health Organization (WHO), focused on addressing inner city health concerns and developing solutions. Dr. Towns is board certified in Preventive Medicine and Public Health, has practiced Primary Care medicine, and was the Director of the Primary Care Curriculum and Charles R. Drew University Medicine and Science program for 5 years.

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## The Video Project

*combining the art of video production, counseling and education about relationships...*

The Video Project is a creative program designed to empower youth attending Olympic High School who may have been exposed to domestic violence and/or abuse in their homes, or who may have experienced violence in their dating relationships. The Video Project is a collaboration between Sojourn Services for Battered Women and Their Children, Saint John's Child and Family Development Center, and Children's Hospital of Los Angeles, Division of Research on Youth and Families. The Video Project consists of four major components:

[1] a video class; [2] clinical therapy; [3] outreach and education; [4] formal evaluation.

Working individually or in teams, students conceive, shoot and edit videos at their own pace each day during class. Because of the collaborative nature of video production, students help one another with their videos and often teach each other basic and advanced tips and techniques. Students are assigned to create videos focusing on themes relating to domestic violence, relationships, and self-expression. The video assignments may take the form of music videos, documentaries, visual poems and public service announcements depending on the assignment or student/group preference. Shooting with a video camera, editing on a computer, or acting in a video provide students a variety of unconventional activities to participate in that bring them pleasure and makes the experience fun. In addition, finishing a video and receiving positive feedback from their peers and project staff builds a tremendous amount of self-esteem.

Weekly counseling groups are topic focused allowing students to discuss the issues they are expressing through their projects. Group topics vary, but the primary focus is on different aspects of healthy relationships. Topics include developing trust in relationships, effective communication, family relationship, dating relationships, feeling powerless in a relationship, jealousy, etc. When a need has been identified, one-on-one counseling services are provided to students involved in the Video Project.

Workshops are provided for students on the dynamics of teen dating violence and healthy relationships. Workshops are also provided to teachers to assist them in identifying students in abusive relationships.

The Video project illustrates how much can be accomplished in a short period of time with youth, especially those who had been previously "written-off."

For more information on the Video Project, please contact:

www.vproject.org  
info@vproject.org  
310.399.3827

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## West Area Health Office Welcomes New Staff Members

The West Area Health Office, Service Planning Area (SPA 5) at the Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Health Center, would like to welcome Cesar Azenon, Teresa Garcia, and Tsehay Minas. They will provide services that are population focused and community oriented, with an emphasis on health promotion, health maintenance and disease prevention. Mr. Azenon, Ms. Garcia, and Ms. Minas will specifically provide evaluation and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, communicable diseases and tuberculosis in the SPA 5 area.

For more information on health services provided at the Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Health Center, call (310) 998-3203.

# West Quarterly Chronicle

## Selected Reportable Diseases Provisional Data

Disease	Jul-Sep2003	Jul-Sep2002	Oct-Dec2003	Oct-Dec2002
AIDS	37	18	40	7
Amebiasis	3	5	1	2
Campylobacteriosis	27	38	10	20
Chlamydial Infections	336	290	289	326
Encephalitis	0	1	0	1
Gonorrhea	132	81	108	96
Hepatitis Type A	1	2	5	4
Hepatitis Type B	0	1	0	1
Hepatitis Type C	0	0	0	0
Measles	0	0	0	0
Meningitis	13	5	5	5
Meningococcal Infections	2	0	0	2
Non-gonococcal Urethritis	45	53	29	38
Pertussis	2	3	0	2
Salmonellosis	19	23	10	8
Shigellosis	7	16	16	35
Syphilis, primary & secondary	5	6	6	6
Syphilis, early latent (<1 yr.)	4	5	4	7
Tuberculosis	6	6	21	12

## West SPA Team

A. Belinda Towns, M.D., M.P.H.

**Area Health Officer**

Maxine Liggins, M.D.

**Area Medical Director**

Willie Mae Howard, M.P.A.

**Area Chief Operations Officer**

Martina Travis, RN, PHN

**Area Nurse Manager**

Farimah Fiali,

**Area Epidemiology Analyst**

Jeremiah R. Garza, MA, MPH,  
CHES

**Area Health Educator**

Ali Farjadi

Carolyn Weinrieb

**Public Health Investigation**

Yvette Veal

**Public Health Registrar**

Erika Altamirano

**Area Secretary**

Hector Alta mirano

**Intermediate Typist Clerk**

Maggie Cueva, RN, PHN, NP

Linda Flores, RN

Beryl Inouye, RN, PHN

Liz Kane, RN, PHN

Jennifer Kilburn, RN, PHN

Mary Singaus, RN, PHN

Deanna Ssutu, RN, PHN

**Nursing Staff**

# WEST SPA 5

## CHRONICLE

West Area Health Office

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Santa Monica, CA 90405

For comments, suggestions, or articles for our next newsletter, please contact Jeremiah R. Garza at 323.235.6711 or [jgarza@dhs.co.la.ca.us](mailto:jgarza@dhs.co.la.ca.us)

**Public Health Mission: To safeguard and improve the health of all Los Angeles County residents.**